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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.]

DEAR EDITOR: While looking over the pages of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING, which I find very interesting, I fail to see any article in reference to the male nurse. While I realize that a male nurse is not to-day a very great factor in the nursing profession, it seems to me that a young man can be trained to be equally as valuable in the nursing world as his sister. There seems to be a strong prejudice against the male nurse by some physicians, thinking, perhaps, he might encroach upon their field of work. While the doctor may be justified in some cases, I believe it the fault of the training the nurse received. There are, I believe, a great many cases where a male nurse can be of better service to the doctor as well as the patient. In the first place, in the male wards of all hospitals an orderly is required to do the heavier and more disagreeable work, which ought to be done by a nurse well qualified, whereas if male nurses were employed it would do away with the orderly, and thus be a great saving to the hospital. As a rule orderlies are not selected for their mental qualifications, but for their physical only; and, again, in the majority of nervous cases, the nurse, as well as having diplomacy and using it, requires more strength than the average female nurse possesses for an emergency, thereby perhaps saving the patient's life, besides cutting down the expense of the family in having a male nurse do a great deal of work which properly comes under the head of nursing that otherwise the doctor would have to call and perform with a female nurse on the case. Also in the operating-room the female nurse does not as a rule render as efficient service as a male nurse, for the simple reason that a woman does not make as good a surgeon as a man,—as per Dr. Lorenz. The United States Government is employing a great many female nurses in the hospitals connected with the army, and it gives them credit for doing good work, but where is the physician or army officer who would consent to his sister nursing in the army hospitals?

Doctors often complain that they cannot get good, trustworthy male nurses, but only a few years ago they made the same complaint about female nurses. It is very true that it is hard to find a good male nurse for this reason,—there is only one training-school for male nurses of any account in the United States, and the officials in accepting young men on probation do not inquire into their character and habits, as the majority of those of female training-schools do, consequently some of the nurses are not up to the standard. A course in any training-school does not make a good nurse unless they have the right material to begin with.

Nursing surely is an honorable profession, and is worthy of any young man who is inclined that way. If we had good training-schools throughout the country that would accept young men of good character and education on probation, the doctors would not find it difficult to obtain good male nurses who also

could serve in the male wards of hospitals, thereby reducing the expense to a great degree.

I should be pleased to hear through THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING from anyone on this subject,—why young men cannot be trained equally as well as young women for the nursing profession, and, also, why it would not be to the advantage of hospitals to have male nurses in male wards.

R. D. RIDER,
Professional Nurse.

DEAR EDITOR: The case has recently come to my notice of a young woman who has finished her course in nursing at one of our large training-schools, but who does not receive her diploma until May or June, when the school has its commencement. She came to me for assistance, bringing an excellent letter from her superintendent, who is an old friend of mine. I spoke to the few physicians I happen to know, and they promised to do what they could. Of course, she could not register at any nurses' club or registry without her diploma, and in consequence has been idle considerably over a month, and to-day took a fifteen dollar per week case as an undergraduate in preference to waiting any longer. Is this fair? Should not our training-schools give the diploma as soon as the term of work required in the hospital expires? or, as we cannot all enter and finish at the same time, cannot the school provide work for the unfortunate ones who have to wait until commencement day for their diplomas? In hope that the superintendents will try and rectify this difficulty, believe me, very truly,

MARY C. JANNEY,
Graduate Bellevue, Class of 1891.

BALTIMORE, MD., February 26, 1903.

DEAR EDITOR: Your March number was very interesting, as, indeed, are all. I was particularly interested in the letter by "A Member of a Training-School Committee" about how to keep out unworthy members of the profession. It seems to me a drug or drink fiend should be ineligible, if not for State registration, certainly for membership in the Nurses' Association, as I understand one of its objects is the elevation of the profession. We all know that a drug fiend is *never* cured, and while they might be helped privately, recognition in any society should not be tolerated.

INTERESTED.

[We agree with the writer, but the difficulty is often to secure absolute proof.—ED.]

DEAR EDITOR: The subject of an annuity fund, or some provision for nurses who are beyond the age when active service is possible, should certainly be considered, and there is no time like the present. Nurses themselves must become interested. Those near the retiring age are aware of the necessity, and those now in their prime must realize that time is relentless in passing. That most of the women in the profession have "home ties" is true, but it is they who for the most part provide for those in the homes, and when the breadwinner is incapacitated, what is the outlook?

In England there is a general annuity fund, started, I think, by public subscription and augmented by a system of yearly dues by the nurses. If we can raise and maintain our own fund, so much the better, but let us *begin* the contemplation of such a step. Would it not be well to bring the matter before the Associated

Alumnæ at the May meeting? Surely it is not too much to ask that the nurse in her old age may be considered.

A. RHODES.

DEAR EDITOR: Apropos of the appointment of a graduate of the Illinois Training-School to the position of assistant registrar in the Boston Directory for Nurses, it would interest Boston nurses to know if any of their number applied for the position.

As Miss Macbrien's sister has been registrar for some years, it was quite the natural thing for her to become assistant.

B.

DEAR EDITOR: What are the necessary requirements for membership of the Spanish-American War Nurses' Association? Could a nurse who entered the United States service in January, 1899, and served more than two years at Manila become a member? If so, to whom should she apply for application blanks, etc.?

A SUBSCRIBER.

[A nurse to be eligible to the Society of Spanish-American War Nurses must have served under contract at least one month in the year 1898.—Ed.]

DEAR EDITOR: Can anyone give the writer information about private nursing in Winnipeg, Canada, and addresses of some nurses' homes, salary, expenses, etc.

M.

DEAR EDITOR: I felt much gratified by the way you commented on the remarks of a "Member of a Training-School Committee" in the last number of the JOURNAL. Her criticisms seemed to me wrongly directed, in view of many experiences of my own. What you said of the difficulty many superintendents had in ridding their schools of the unfit was very true.

In my own experience I have myself been treated with the most open suspicion and opposition by women of the Managing Board when trying to weed out the women whom I felt sure would not bring honor upon the profession, and in bringing even quite glaring proofs of incompetency against pupils who had shown the "cloven hoof" I have found, to my astonishment, that it was I, not the culprit, who was on trial.

I have even heard the president of a woman's board say that she always made it known among the nurses that any of them were welcome to come to her with complaints of any kind (complaints against the superintendent were, by inference, the ones which they would make), as she thought this prevented their being treated with injustice.

The curious thing is that when these nurses get outside and make mistakes or give dissatisfaction not a woman on the board has anything but unmitigated condemnation for them.

The "Member of the Training-School Committee" does not know her subject when she talks about the alumnæ societies taking in and keeping in all the good-for-nothings. I wish she had witnessed a scene at which I once sat as a spectator. It was the meeting of an alumnæ society of a well-known school. A member, some time after graduation, had brought discredit upon the name of nurse. Her offence was moral and ethical, yet she was a fine nurse and had stood well. The question of her expulsion from the society was up and was debated with great

seriousness. Arguments for charity and toleration were not wanting, but the final conclusion was that the name of the society must be an absolutely reliable guarantee to the public.

The vote was taken, and at the call for the "nays" one old and faithful friend, in a silence that was painful, arose and stood for a moment. The "ayes" were taken, and every other woman arose. Many of them also were friends of the erring one, but the responsibility to the public came first. I have met few board women so solemnly conscientious in guarding the standards entrusted to them.

On the other hand, I have known scores of women on boards who were just and considerate to both superintendent and pupils to whom I shall always feel deeply grateful.

AN OLD NURSE.

DEAR EDITOR: I wish to know through your pages where an Ellis's feeding-cup may be procured. If you cannot tell me, perhaps some of your readers may be able to do so.

KATHLEEN McCLEES.

DEAR EDITOR: Will you through the pages of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING give me the names of the hospitals that accept pupils for post-graduate work outside of their own school, also the best schools for general work?

A SUBSCRIBER.

[LETTERS to the Editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—ED.]

